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Iron Hill School Oral History Project

Interview with Raynor Johnson

Date of Interview: February 21, 2007

Interviewer: Roberta Perkins

Roberta: This is Roberta Perkins. Today is Wednesday, February 21, 2007 and I am here interviewing Mr. Raynor Johnson at his home in Newark and he is going to share with us his knowledge of the Iron Hill community and his life as the son of an owner of Dayette Mill and his experience with Dayette Mill. Mr. Raynor, Mr. Johnson thank you so much for willing to take this time and already on what we've talked about. Generally it sounds extremely interesting and I can't wait for the rest of it so I'm going to ask you to recap a little bit what you've already told me and then just go for it and it sounds like we're going to have a good time.

R. Johnson: Very good and thanks for coming. I think it's very important that each generation documents the folklore and the experiences that they have encountered in their particular life passage. With this, I will make very clear that I am not an historian but I have lived in Delaware all my life, native born and have lived within a mile and a half of Iron Hill Museum from my birth until now pretty much. With this you come into a lot of things that have happened in the community and I would like to share some of those things for future studies or for someone to look up or follow through later on. Let me try to guide this in a way of folklore or information that somehow by mistake or someone bringing it to me or some endeavors that I've been in have brought this to my attention. The black or colored or Afro American community in this area is probably very unique to anywhere on the east coast. The first inkling of a black person or colored person did not come from Africa in the area I know of on the manifest of the Kalmar Nickel that came in from Sweden I believe in 1638 has one person listed on that manifest that was

of a color at that time. Since Sweden is a good distance from Afro American I want to be careful how I phrase nomenclature as we look at it today. That puts us roughly sixty years before the next area of where I understand that the blacks were involved and I use this because I don't know the origin of where people are coming and please feel free to correct me or anyone doing the study later on how to do this. I think all people are of equal rank on down as to their abilities so therefore I don't want to look at any prejudice in the way I try to diagram what is happening over this [inaudible] time. William Penn signed a land grant with the Welsh in 1701. We definitely know that there were a number of other inhabitants other than the red man in this area by history of the Dutch coming in, the English coming up from Baltimore and the lack of documentation which we generally look at in the way of [inaudible] and the English law was not present. When William Penn came in we then brought in the English law based on the Magna Carta. With this came a contract or a deed which is a contract which gives us a traceable history of what is happening in this area. Through this, in William Penn's area, there is indication that there were other colored inhabitants or intermarrying at this period but nothing that I know of that is firmly documented or folklore. The James family was part of the Welsh Tract Church signing and got land of the William Penn contract [inaudible] of Welsh Tract in 1701. Under that the James family had some flour mills and also did some type of iron mining in which they would take iron, use charcoal to melt it and it was stuck in an open pan forge type mining at the time. The glass furnace as a furnace did not come in until 1726-1730. In this period of time there were two or three failures. It is awful hard to document by the deeds, the sheriff sales and the different members of the family who were doing what or who were doing exactly what but one of the James' family got into trouble with their milling and iron/blacksmith work or what have you and there was from a Thomas Cooch book a story in that book [inaudible] about the stevedore who was given free land because the family could not pay his wages for driving wagons from Lancaster down to this area. If we go back and look at the deeding in the land behind Iron Hill School you'll see acre lots on the poorest land in the community or towards Pleasant Valley which is

also poor land and wet for the free black or colored community at that time. The lot right behind Iron Hill School, right next to the Indian Jasper Mine takes us back [inaudible] to about this period of time. If you look at the little colored church right across Whittaker Road, Saint Daniels I think it is, if you go to the graveyard at Saint Daniels you'll find same families listed there and you can barely read it you really need to do tracings on a couple of the wood tombstones and if we are gonna protect the history of this area we should update those stones in some way that brings dignity but also tells the story of the community. From there I sort of lose the history except there were free blacks in the area. Again there was definite segregation in a way that free blacks were treated in the way of schooling and also general positions in the community. With that Delaware then became a neutral state in the Civil War and was very instrumental in the Underground Railroad. You never knew which spy or what you were talking about or which family how it existed but between 1701 and the Civil War we can go back to records that the state has and look at the population or wills or inventory that's there and you can tell that this was both a free state and a slave area and it could vary within the same owner or area of having both free, slave and also indentured for paying the passage here so we have to be very careful in our terminology but what I find very interesting as a young boy and on down the [inaudible] or the house across from Mr. Cooch's and it goes under two or three different names.

Roberta: Do you know how to spell that?

R. Johnson: He had a barn out back that had pretty much disappeared but the leg irons and stuff were anchored in the walls of that barn as part of the history of slavery. So I was told when I asked the question what in fact this was back in the early 1950's that history is all gone. We might find it in the rubble if we did some archives were in the area. At the same time there was evidence just down the road that there at the old Irwin property which had a log cabin and on down of free slaves or the Underground Railroad as folk lore would pass on. My first encounter with the black community was a very pleasant one in which the Williams' family on

Old Cooch's Bridge Road had a farm and Mrs. Williams would go to market twice a week and I lived just down the road from them. We had a couple acres of land and my family raised chickens and we would take the eggs down to Mrs. Williams and she would take them to market and when my mother passed away when I was six I thought it was very remarkable that they asked to bring us, my dad and myself, in and be a part of their family. I thought that gave me a very high esteem for that family and they were very successful in farming. If you wanted to know where this farm is today it is right under Glasgow High School and I believe there were two sons and a daughter and the daughter also lived in a brick house where the school was at this time. I lost track of the son, Kenneth Williams I think is farming but this was a very, very outstanding family for the area.

Roberta: I must ask you Ray when were you born.

R. Johnson: September 2, 1940. I'm now 67 years of age or going on 67 years young. The next area of really tying into the community was my father and my aunt bought Dayett Mills in 1945 and in that period of time right after that '45 to early '50 they hired some of Williams' black help in the area to work with the other employees in manufacturing flour, seed and [inaudible]. On what is now about where the turnpike information [inaudible] is to the Hot Shoppe is was the farm of Willahand(?) and as the tenant farmer of Willahand was Mr. Todd and [inaudible] Todd. She was married I think to a Jones before Mr. Todd. She had a number of sons and most of those sons from both marriages were involved in the Pleasant Valley area, another fabulous family. Mr. Todd was an excellent farmer and would bring his grain and everything down to the mill to be ground. Charlie Jones was hired about this time and also Marian Todd. Charlie Jones worked with me up until I believe it was '95 so he was with me for about thirty-five or forty years. He was head of mixing and manufacturing the feed and handled that area. Marian Todd was an excellent person and working out on the truck delivering to customers like Kim and Jim Lindell(?). There was always a smile, always a pleasant greeting and Marion passed away about fifteen years ago due to

pneumonia very, very quickly and we have missed him over the years and the friendly greetings that we would get.

Roberta: I'm going to ask you a quick question here. Do you know how Mr. Lindell's name was spelled? Was it Lindell?

R. Johnson: L I N D E L L. With that we came into the community a number of ways. One buying feed. The Congo family, the Webb family, the Money family and Mr. Money at one time also worked for us. Mr. Money was a great guy who drove a large car, always had a smile on his face and a cigar. I probably remember the cigar more than anything else at the time because whether it was lit or not you could smell it. It's amazing how little impressions last. His wife, they lived on Pleasant Valley Road. Now there's an interesting thing about Pleasant Valley Road. If you went south from Old Baltimore Pike or Old Post Road there was Pleasant Valley Road but if you went north it was Ott's Chapel Road and it sort of was the way of separating the white community from the black community which was a shame but the black community owned the land from basically the Maryland line and along Old Baltimore Pike out along Pleasant Valley Road with this, if you get close to the road, go out Pleasant Valley Road to almost Route 40 there was a ramblod sort of white clap board two story **[inaudible]** on the right with a huge wood pile it always had in front of it and that's where Mr. Money and Mrs. Money lived and they farmed wood. What I found out later that there was a log cabin in the house and I **[inaudible]** additional documentation would you believe they were half way in between New Castle and Elkton or **[inaudible]** basically. That has a tremendous amount of history and right alongside of it is the first attempt of putting in the feeder canal by Latrobe and comes right across that area so the Money property has a tremendous amount of history not only in the area of black history but also transportation of the area by **[inaudible]** stage coach you think of it as an inn to stay overnight and the first attempt by Latrobe of the C&D Canal and which Latrobe remember was the architect or engineer for the Capital(?) of the United States. He also did the Philadelphia Waterworks but he lived in the stone house on Old Baltimore Pike and it was the only property he

owned which was the old Garland(?) property. One thing that brings me very much to mind and I do not know the name that I heard **[inaudible]** over the period of time right across from where the Moneys lived was Pencader Inn or Glasgow Inn or whatever it was Mrs. Moneys' sister that owned it and it was a beer garden and restaurant and had trailers around it in which you could rent a trailer and supported those in the community as an area this is where Marion Todd stayed period of time and she provided the meals for those who were working. I must say the best apple pie I have ever had she baked and it was the best home cooking that you could ever find.

Roberta: Now these were people who were working at the mill or just in the general area?

R. Johnson: The Moneys, the Joneses and the Todds worked at the mill, Mr. Money but these are other people that came in in the community and their place. The Congo's became a very influential family in the community owning land also a funeral parlor in Wilmington, serving a chauffeur industry for DuPont. I think they own a couple restaurants now and on down and their numbers. I don't know that much about the Webb family how they were **[inaudible]** but they were a very well-spoken family in the area and in the middle of this we had a mongrel called **[inaudible]** Biggs(?) that was probably the best bootlegger around and every once in a while one of the houses would go up in the community especially the ones on Whitaker Road and some houses still just blew up. But this is a little bit of what was happening in the community. Mr. Money did an excellent job of supporting the kids in the community and seeing that they get to Middletown schools and also they were quite active in the churches in the area and there've been at least three churches developed from within the area and I think Rev. Congo, one of the members of the family was the minister to the one in Glasgow and maybe another one on Old Baltimore Pike as a member but I'm not sure. This whole community was basically self-sufficient. They had their own chickens, they had their own cows and they were employed very well in a number of different areas supporting the community. It is sad to see these free black landowners' parcels being destroyed by development and very expensive houses at this point. It is very

important that we document those lots behind Iron Hill and the deeds have shown that there was a free community and that there was landowners and that they participated in the whole area at the time and I think this is where the work is that you're doing and the work that Iron Hill Museum is so very important and we need to put the Iron Hill Museum back as a history site the way it was or a place of **[inaudible]** to tell the story because it is an important story. I don't know how many places in a neutral state area that Delaware was that there was a definite free land going back a hundred, a hundred fifty years before the Civil War. That's a rough over view of what I can remember.

Roberta: This is great. I'm going to at this point turn the tape over and ask a question of you in particular. This ends tape one, side one.

Roberta: This is tape one, side two and I'm still speaking here with Mr. Raynor Johnson. Mr. Johnson, I'm gonna fall back a little bit from your picture that you're giving of the general African American community as you experienced it and kind of focus on you a little bit. I'd like to find out a little bit more about your family and just kinda like start, give me a picture of who your mother and father were. Do you have any siblings? You mentioned, I'm asking too many questions, but and you mentioned your aunt and your father purchasing the mill so we can kind of move on from that and if you don't remember what I just said just ask me.

R. Johnson: They tell me I was hatched as a little boy. My mother was **[inaudible]** and she was forty years of age before I came along and my dad came from the Johnson family and I really don't know a lot about him from down state. His father was a miller for Mr. Dayette and they lived in the miller's tenant house and my grandfather was the head miller. Then my father and my aunt worked with Mr. Dayette and my grandfather passed away. With that that left a large (?) family on the Johnson side and the same thing happened on the **[inaudible]** side. My parents basically raised two large families working, Dad at the mill and worked his way up to head miller and my mother did secretarial work in Wilmington and did other odd jobs, had a large garden and chickens and we were able to supply those who

followed [inaudible] and were very active in the community. She passed away when I was six. We sold the house on Old Cooch's Bridge Road just down from Williams just before that year her passing away my dad, my aunt and Charles Gold (?) bought the business from Mr. Dayette who wanted to retire which was Dayette Mill and the following year purchased the property in this area. At this time, this is during World War II, the family, the business manufactured a lot of poultry seed for the community and this area [inaudible] egg production and supplied Philadelphia and New York with eggs in the area and they were intermixed with the Afro-American community. There is two distinct different cultures even to the [inaudible].

Roberta: Even to the what?

R. Johnson: Even to the [inaudible] or steam bath in which they would go out and have steam baths if you look at some of the little buildings on the poultry farm there should be a little building out back and they would heat rocks up and pour water over them and have a steam bath even when it was brutally cold and snow was on the ground you could see footsteps going in and out. It was one of the unique things.

Roberta: Now these were the Finn families, the Finnish families?

R. Johnson: Yes and it's hard to define where the Finns began and the Swedes let go. If you back to Swedish history Sweden [inaudible] Finland and in Sweden it was illegal to cut trees. In Finland they had a lot of trees and they were cut down and the penalty of cutting trees down was being exported to America [inaudible]. This was very unique because the Finns began to [inaudible] Indian habitat in which the Finns would girdle the tree and kill the tree and this provided compost for planting the vegetables or whatever they wanted to plant. It also gave sunlight to a cleared area and most people don't realize that in this area Swedes came over and whatever [inaudible] that there was a base (?) here but it also went very well with the Indians base for farming because they were able to trade and seventy-five percent of the trees at that time were the American Chestnut trees that split very well. It was a very large tree. It provided nuts that you could make flour out of

and on down. It was a good adaption to the Finnish or Swedish culture.

[inaudible] Finland broke away from Sweden so it's hard to define exactly which culture and because of the background of the Indians and also with the Afro American community coming in it's awful hard to find **[inaudible]** trees beyond the local area or **[inaudible]**. Along with this we then did this **[inaudible]**, we went into manufacturing other feed such as dog food, **[inaudible]** institutional products and we distributed those for Pillsbury, General Mills Hunt Wesson and the baking end of **[inaudible]** making flour so if you take one bag of flour **[inaudible]** or top restaurants like the Hotel DuPont for their pastry and there's an area from roughly Philadelphia to almost down to Baltimore and all the way down **[inaudible]** territory. With this I started working in the business about the age of nineteen and went ahead and got additional schooling and then in 1959 Dad passed away and I bought into the partnership and then in 1960 we incorporated as a corporation and then acquired additional stock of the corporation. The years passed on and the business operated until 1996. That sort of gives you a .

Roberta: And then 1996 what happened?

R. Johnson: We got the state to buy the property and the intention was to put it into a working **[inaudible]** and protect the water rights and also the barrel field that the **[inaudible]** Cooch's Bridge. To this day we are still working at that challenge.

Roberta: Ok. Ray what was your schooling? You know as a young person starting a school, where did you go to school here?

R. Johnson: Well, I always went to Newark High School. I could not read so I ended up taking **[inaudible]** Johnny and reading the Reader's Digest Book "Why Johnny Can't Read" under **[inaudible]** **[tape lost sound]**

apprenticeship, got into running lawn mowers and then doing mowing. Education, from there I got into 4H and there was an excellent person by the name of Miss Wickman (?) who got me into doing **[inaudible]** then canning, rush work and

turned my apprentice ship as a refinisher from there I [**tape lost sound once more**]

R. Johnson: (The Congo's lived on both sides of Old Baltimore Pike. The Webb's lived on Ott's Chapel Road and I think at one time up along Whittaker Road. I'm not sure. [**inaudible**])

Roberta: So some members of the Congo family did work at the mill? I know you mentioned earlier that they brought [**inaudible**] there.

R. Johnson: I do not remember. It's hard to tell. Sometimes when we needed help that community came in to help and also I had some of the [**inaudible**] boys helped me sometimes.

Roberta: It sounded like growing up you spent a lot of time working. What did you do for fun?

R. Johnson: For a number of years as long as I have known I have tried to put in about twenty hours a day seven days a week. I usually try to take a week off or a weekend off and go the shore. I did a tremendous amount of youth work in 4H, different projects and I had fun and there were some problems [**inaudible**] in the solution and in the Johnson Administration [**inaudible**] came in very heavily on small business.

Roberta: Federal food and?

R. Johnson: And drugs. That we had to have everything on power (?) and things of that nature and when you have a mill that was built in the 1800's it's not equipped for 1950 forklift truck so I ended up working and evolving solutions [**inaudible**] that later led to low pressure hose clamp movement (?) and developed a patent in that area or the technology in the area and was [**inaudible**] to go back and take the challenge of developing how do you do a task (?) and that was sort of like a challenge, that was recreation.

Roberta: Let me go back and ask you a question about 1954 when you say you instituted in this area I guess. What do you remember of that time and by that I mean what do you know of how it affected families, the children that went to other than Iron Hill?

R. Johnson: Number one I think this community had already established itself by that date. It was sort of self [inaudible]. They were [inaudible]. They had a good religious base [inaudible]. They had somewhat of a base of education that was destroyed (?) in which I did not know the reason or what have you of the Newark [inaudible] district not taking them in at the same time they took the corner of Pleasant Valley Road and Old Baltimore Pike, the white (?) [inaudible] school had and the kids, the younger generation [inaudible] that was a [inaudible] hardship but the community banded together I think it was tremendous inspirational and unique area of how they did it. Some sold animals, they gathered old trucks and bus and the seats but it also brought the community together [inaudible] so that I thought when they came into the Newark school district later on, I think some two or three years later whatever. We didn't have guards standing at the doors like we had in Wilmington or like you had in the southern area. It was a, it wasn't a hostile or caution integration and from there, there were some students that were very, very blunt and made it very clear that when some of the class was getting "D's" or low scores there were some in the Afro American community that were getting "A+'s" that they had a place in the community and I don't think many people think about that in the way of performance and a class coming together. I saw this in the classes that I attended and also very active in the athletic programs as well. But what really stood out was some of them in the academic program and also their goals to be self-sufficient or enter business or whatever they wanted to say [inaudible]. It wasn't really trades or secondary trade positions but it was actually a engineering or profession that most of them were looking for. So this was a good way of telling the story without having to say or do anything. The other thing I found that there was a tremendous rift between the agriculture community and the suburban or metropolitan community of both Wilmington especially in which here we are we have been down all these years

give me everything and support my life, be my plantation father to government rather than being self-sufficient and it sucked. If you're not going to be my father, I'm going to throw bricks at you and here came the National Guard [inaudible] and these families want the Congo family that met in the evening in their community [inaudible] a funeral parlor or office area meetings in these other areas and their community. They [inaudible] for business, they [inaudible] on going culture [inaudible] so you had to give Pleasant Valley a lot of credit for setting a fine (?) example of what we take for granted today. We still have a lot of post [inaudible] but we're also having people now doing professional things, being in a professional job, buying upper class housing and moving out of the community. We've had enough generation time that generation there to bring itself up by [inaudible] generation of which took place and the path and I think that it is wonderful.

Roberta: Question, going back to the classroom. Did you ever observe black students being treated any differently as far as in the classroom by teachers? Do you remember any of that?

R. Johnson: The human body has the ability to forget negative and just remember positive and most of my experiences have been very positive as I previously mentioned. I did not the negative that I could see. Of course the ones that dropped out of school or never got there or didn't push that extra energy to perform or why do I need an education I can go to Chrysler and work on the assembly line type thing which is wonderful. It provides a need an area on down and fills positions but it doesn't fill the [inaudible]. It supports bodies for that group such as the doctor or dentist or teacher or an engineer. Your still doing a labor task and labor tasks is always paid by the hour not by the ability of the person and I think Pleasant Valley has brought out very much of how they developed the ability of the person and I think this goes back to the pre environment back in the 1700's. That's the best way I can answer your question.

Roberta: That's satisfactory, yes. Would you be willing to draw us, from your memory, a map of that area? Doesn't have to be fancy, think about it.

R. Johnson: I think about the areas open to [inaudible] basically on Old Cooch's Bridge Road going up the road of Old Baltimore Pike towards Wilmington the Todd family on the [inaudible] hand then a concentration of the area around the Iron Hill School going up Whittaker Road to maybe the top of the hill across to Pleasant Valley Road to Dixie Line Road and the Maryland line then coming down a thousand feet on the south side of Old Baltimore Pike to Pleasant Valley Road and probably a thousand feet in Pleasant Valley Road out to Route 40. Now as to whose family was and what family I think you'll have to go back to the records. The problem is the courthouse, New Castle County, burned in the middle of the '80's so we have a gap in there of information but I think you'll get an excellent one from the record of deeds and the property and if you take [inaudible] and right off the computer there's a plot plan and just put the names on those and the date of ownership you'll have the best map that you can have and it will be a lot more accurate than mine.

Roberta: Oh Ray, this has been quite an education for me. I've thoroughly enjoyed it. Do you have anything else that I haven't asked that you'd like to share before we?

R. Johnson: The only thing is I think, you, the Iron Hill Museum, Laura, the Academy of Science and with what has happened in the last month the grant from Lowe's to restore the colored (?) museum the \$93,000 or \$97,000 and that will be used by the museum to work along with the Academy of Science trying to clear up a [inaudible] which kept the [inaudible] and the Indian area out of that area into a separate building. At the site of the Iron Hill Museum we have four areas in then twenty acres that tell a [inaudible] history. The Indian history for that 10,000 B.C. (?) and making spears or tools and then after roughly 5,000 B.C. resulting the arrow head and the trading from upper New York state to Ohio, Illinois the transportation trading jasper. Each mineral has its own DNA you might say and can be traced. We then have the Swedish Finnish, Afro-American, I don't want to say black in this space because I don't know where the word came from we then

have a documentation free black history and appeared in 1700 and 1720. In the meantime we have the Swedish history and a melting pot of the Indian, some reference to black group of settlers as they come in in a number of ways and the Swedish or Finnish in the metal industry which also applies to the [inaudible] industry so in this one little area you have this much culture and each one of those areas needs to be separated and [inaudible] just cause and what is unique rather than mixing it all together and not [inaudible] coming through and not getting confused. So with the path of telling us a story and the Pleasant Valley area, the work that you're doing with documentation is so important for future generations.

Roberta: We think so too. Thank you very much, I really appreciate this.

R. Johnson: You are very welcome.

Roberta: This ends interview tape one, side two.

Roberta: This is Roberta Perkins, tape 2 side 1. I have one additional question to ask Mr. Johnson. I have one question that I failed to ask you. This was a family, African American family that lived in the Dayett Mill area. Do you remember a Smoot family?

R. Johnson: Yes.

Roberta: Ok. Bill Smoot is one of the people we interviewed.

R. Johnson: Smoot and Ham Taylor was another one. I don't know that much about him.

Roberta: I thought he said he lived near the railroad area back there.

R. Johnson: Again I think Smoot's lived there. Now this has to be the son you talked with. The father I think lived cross over Christiana Railroad or creek or whatever you want to call it before, just before you get to the railroad going toward Route 40 there's a low plot of land it's now a firewood place or it looks like an industrial place. I think Smoots lived there and later Ham Taylor. It was a very small shack like I think maybe with Smoots it was larger and there was a fire and Ham had a shack

like or whatever. He cut wood and things around and did odd jobs. I also think, didn't the Smoots at one time live down in Pleasant Valley?

Roberta: That's what I'm not sure, that part I don't remember. They may have.

R. Johnson: I remember the family talking. I think I remember a face coming into the mill. If I remember they were an active family in one of the churches but I really don't know that much about them.

Roberta: That's fine.

R. Johnson: And there's no one that I can ask now. Everyone has passed away.

Roberta: I just thought I would ask it because I did remember you said that, that's all.

R. Johnson: I don't know that much about Ham Taylor except he would cut the fire wood during the day and disappear at night and that was fine he needed wood for his stove and the one down but I've heard that he was among the tenant houses. Being in an odd position I didn't get into how I sold, how the museum was transformed from a, what do I want to say, a neglected piece of property and I'm not suggesting [inaudible] I'm just [inaudible]

Roberta: I'm going to put you on the spot a little bit so if you would go on and repeat as much as what you just told me off record.

R. Johnson: I can remember seeing what is now the building of the Iron Hill Museum which was the school very much in shambles and had been abandoned. I also remember some other important things somewhere between 1960 and '64 there was a tremendous fire in that spring and we had high winds that started on Iron Hill Road and burned all the way across to Cooch's Bridge Road. At the same time we had a large fire in Delaware City and burned the marshes. I think every piece of fire equipment within the local county were there. We had eighty pieces of equipment on the Iron Hill site two engines were there to put water on the old wood shingled well that was on the school and we did have some burn through from sparks from the embers of the fire. They were put out. My job that day was

opening gates and closing gates and providing enough water to fill the pumping engine so I really didn't get up here until after the damage was done and filed the report of where the engines were and what happened. With that we come on up to about 1969 or '70 and I have to go back and look at some things. There was a program just started by the Newark School District in Rittenhouse Park by Faith(?) Erickson. Her father was Taber who was the state forester and wrote the book on Delaware trees. So with that she took footage from Rittenhouse Park up to Chestnut Hill and looked at the nature studies what insects, what mammals were in the area, what type trees and plants and also a little history on the iron mining area has now been eight acres given through CHIPP which is part of Delaware Academy of Science to preserve that iron mining area and more today is strict **[inaudible]** of the Newark Parks **[inaudible]**. With that, that program got so successful in our group it was suggested, I was serving at the time as chairman of the Newark Economic Development Committee for the Newark Chamber of Commerce which is now the New Castle Chamber of Commerce, that we would see what we could do on the acreage at Iron Hill School and the Newark School District put in the windows that were out, the shingles for another roof, the building was painted and we got display cases from Bing's Bakery and those display cases were made by Hoag (?) the outstanding cabinet maker who was Mrs. Bing's brother. The bird(?) collection came from a little motel over at Red Lion and the other displays we made at Dayette Mills and brought up. With that it turned over from the Newark School District to the Delaware Mineralogical Society and then it got, it was supposed to be an actual history museum and then it got turned over to a mainly mineral museum and they ran into some difficulty and then it went to the Delaware Academy of Science and since then the hope was to put a new museum back and here we are thirty years later and maybe the goal **[inaudible]**. At the time when we were transferring the old building and refurbishing it there was a playground there, there was a maypole or an area, a swing and a see saw and I think some of those remnants are still there today I don't know about the maypole but the swings are and the see saw, but this was the recreational area that we dubbed our mission(?). There are two bathrooms and the

school was originally heated by a coal stove and at that time some of the old desks were put up in the attic whether they are still there or not I have no idea but that's how we went from the abandoned **[inaudible]** to the Newark School District and then it was moved to the Delaware Academy of Science when the school district wanted to back out but the dollar amount was **[inaudible]** was sort of running the museum and that theory was **[inaudible]** still changed. I think I gave you a little bit of history on this.

Roberta: Yes, it does thank you again.

R. Johnson: You are welcome.